



GEORGIA
CHARTER SCHOOLS
COMMISSION

**The 2011 Commission
Petition Application and Instructions**

“Building a Better Educated Georgia”

Commission Charter School Application Instructions

A. The Petition

A Commission charter school petition is a proposal to create a new start-up school and should address the applicable requirements contained in the Charter Schools Act of 1998, as amended (O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-2060 through 20-2-2071), State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9-.04 CHARTER SCHOOLS, and Department of Education Guidance to Accompany the Charter Schools Rule. Please also refer to the guidance materials available on the Georgia Charter Schools Commission website, www.gcsc.ga.gov, in creating your petition.

The petition is a proposal for a charter school, which will be evaluated by the Georgia Charter Schools Commission to determine whether the proposed charter school complies with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures, whether the proposal will be viable in operation, and whether the proposed charter school is in the public interest. Filing a petition for a charter school does not guarantee that a charter will be granted.

B. Deadline and Submission Procedures

Petitions must be sent to the address below and postmarked (or hand-delivered) no later than **June 15** prior to the year in which the charter school intends to begin operations:

Georgia Charter Schools Commission
1414 Twin Towers West
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

All petitions must comply with the following submission procedures:

- Petitions submitted previously to local school boards must be revised to follow the format of the Commission Petition Application. The substantive aspects of the school proposals contained therein may not be altered materially from their original submission to the local district, however. Petitioners may introduce new substantive information only in response to questions directed towards adapting the original school proposal to a Commission charter school model.
- Consecutively number each page (including appendices).
- Use index tabs and paginate all appendices.
- Do not enclose the petition in a notebook, binder, or folder.
- The original must be signed in blue ink. Stamped signatures will not be accepted.
- Petitions must not exceed 100 pages, exclusive of appendices. Please use Times New Roman, no smaller than 11 font size. Petitioners are encouraged to be clear and concise in addressing the petition requirements.

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Faxed or e-mailed copies will not be accepted; only petitions received through the postal service or hand delivered by June 15 will be accepted. Only complete petitions that comply with these guidelines will be considered for approval. Petitions will not be returned. Please keep a copy for your records.

C. Petition Application Checklist

- Submit the **ORIGINAL** and **THREE COPIES** of the materials listed below, unless otherwise indicated.
 - ☐ **Completed Charter Petition Cover Pages (in the form attached below)**
 - ☐ **Charter Petition and Appendices**
 - ☐ **Charter Petition Cover Pages, Charter Petition and Appendices in Microsoft Word format (1 CD) (All one file)**
 - ☐ **Letter of Intent submitted to the local board(s) of education***
 - ☐ **The local board's denial letter and all previous denial letters from earlier petition submissions for the school proposal (Note: Charter School Petitioners who plan to enroll students from five or more counties are still required to submit this information if they applied locally as a single district school prior to applying to the Commission)**
 - ☐ **The written response to the local board's stated reasons for denial***

* These items are not required for charter school petitioners who plan to enroll students from five or more counties. For petitioners who were approved locally and still seek Commission approval, please provide an explanation for seeking authorization from the Commission and attach any documents from the local board regarding the approval.

Commission Charter Petition Cover Pages

Part I. Charter School Information

This charter school petition is being submitted by a (check one):

☐ Private Individual(s)

Name of Individual

☐ Private Organization

Name of Organization

Name of Proposed Charter School _____

Location of Charter School _____

Proposed Attendance Zone (inclusive of all counties and city school districts claimed)

Contact person _____

Name

Title

Contact address _____

Telephone number of contact _____

Fax number of contact _____

E-mail address of contact _____

Part II. Assurances and Signatures

1. This charter petition was reviewed and approved by the _____

Governing Board on _____.
Date

Charter Petitioner (or Principal)

Date

Chair, Governing Board

Date

2. If a Charter is granted, all Petitioners assure that the proposed charter school programs, services, and activities will operate in accordance with the terms of the Charter and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

Charter Petitioner

Date

Part III. Executive Summary

The executive summary should not exceed **2 pages** and must include the following information:

Basic Information

Charter School Name _____

Grade Levels Served _____ **Ages Served** _____

Proposed Opening Date _____

Proposed Charter Term _____ (If the petition seeks a term greater than 5 years, explain the rationale for the requested term length.)

Enrollment Numbers - For each year of the proposed charter term, please indicate the number of pupils the charter school plans to serve.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Yr 1														
Yr 2														
Yr 3														
Yr 4														
Yr 5														

Mission

- State the charter school's mission and describe how it promotes the legislative intent to "increase student achievement through academic and organizational innovation." O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2061.

Academic Program

- Strategies to increase student achievement
- State concrete examples of academic innovation/flexibility offered by your program

Organization

- Operated by Education Management Organization? Any co-sponsors?
- Evidence of community interest/need
- Examples of organizational innovation or flexibility

Governing Board

Please attach a list of all current governing board members, including a brief bio, relevant experience, position held on governing board, and length of service on the governing board. The list should not exceed 2 pages.

Part IV. Commission School Petition Requirements

Address the following requirements and insert the appropriate page number(s) of the petition.

HISTORY OF SCHOOL PROPOSAL

1. Page ____ Describe the origins of the school proposal, including the creation of the founding/governing board, the development of the proposal, and the timeline of the development of the petition.
2. Page ____ Describe any prior attempts by the founding/governing board to start a charter school, including any previous petition submissions to districts, the State Board of Education, or the Georgia Charter Schools Commission.
3. Page ____ If applicable, describe how the school proposal has changed from previous petition submissions.
4. Page ____ If the petitioner has submitted a version of the current school proposal to the Commission previously, please describe how the petitioner has addressed and resolved all concerns and reasons stated for denial by the Commission in the current proposal.
5. Page ____ Describe the decision and rationale to locate the school in the proposed attendance zone and location.
6. Page ____ Describe how parents, community members, and other interested parties were involved in developing the petition and will be involved in the school, including involvement with the governing body of the school.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

7. Page ____ Describe the focus of the curriculum.
8. Page ____ Describe the instructional methods to be used in the charter school, including any distinctive or unique instructional techniques or educational programs.
9. Page ____ Describe the anticipated teacher-to-student ratio and the rationale for maintaining this ratio.
10. Page ____ Describe how the charter school will meet the needs of students identified as gifted and talented.
11. Page ____ Describe any extracurricular or other auxiliary educational activities the charter school may offer, including the description of any partnerships or agreements between the charter school and any entity regarding these activities.
12. Page ____ If this is a charter high school, describe how the charter high school will determine that a student has satisfied the requirements for high school graduation, including the credits or units to be earned and the completion credentials to be awarded.

STATE AND FEDERALLY MANDATED SERVICES

13. Page ____ For students with disabilities, describe how the charter school will provide state and federally mandated services, including the school's plans to evaluate and identify students with disabilities; to develop, review and revise IEPs; to integrate special education into the general education program; to deliver special education and related

services; to ensure that the school facility meets the requirements of other related laws including the ADA and Section 504; to address student discipline; to handle programming disputes involving parents; to ensure confidentiality of special education records; to purchase services from special education vendors; and to secure technical assistance and training.

14. Page ____ For English Language Learners (ESOL), describe how the charter school will provide state and federally mandated services.
15. Page ____ Describe how the charter school will provide supplemental educational services in required cases pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.03 and NCLB.
16. Page ____ Describe how the charter school will provide remediation in required cases pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.01 and NCLB.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT METHODS AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

17. Page ____ Describe the charter school's assessment plan to obtain student performance data for each student, including the students' baseline achievement data, which will be used in connection with the academic performance-based goals and measurable objectives stated in the petition.
18. Page ____ Explain the charter school's plan to participate in all state-mandated assessments and provide a timeline of when assessments will be administered per grade.

PERFORMANCE-BASED GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

19. Page ____ Describe the academic performance-based goals and related measurable objectives for the charter school. Academic goals must be related to state and federal assessment standards. For each goal, provide measurable objectives that address each grade and content area for each year of the charter term. Academic goals should be rigorous, yet realistic and attainable, and to the extent possible, should be developed in connection with the students' baseline achievement levels. Describe how these academic goals and measurable objectives will comply with the Single Statewide Accountability System.
20. Page ____ Describe the organizational and management performance-based goals and measurable objectives for the charter school. Organizational and management goals and measurable objectives should describe and measure the effectiveness, viability and competency of the organization, which may include, for example, financial management and performance, operational management, and satisfaction of a range of stakeholders.

WAIVERS

21. Page ____ State whether the charter school will utilize the broad flexibility from law, rule, and regulation permitted by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(a), and if so, include illustrative examples of how the charter school will implement the flexibility to meet or exceed the performance-based goals and to increase student achievement.
22. Page ____ If the school will not utilize this flexibility, list the specific waivers requested and the rationale for each. Describe further how each waiver will help the school meet or exceed the performance-based goals and to increase student achievement.

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DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS

- 23. Page ____ Describe the attendance zone for the charter school.
- 24. Page ____ Describe how the school will comply with all requirements for local education agencies (LEAs).
- 25. Page ____ Describe the rules and procedures that will govern the admission of students to the charter school, including whether the charter school will use any enrollment priorities pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)(A).
- 26. Page ____ Describe the organizational structure of the school's administrative team.
- 27. Page ____ Describe the charter school's plan for recruiting students and for maintaining and increasing enrollment, including steps that will be taken to reach students representative of the racial and socioeconomic diversity in the school system where the school is located.
- 28. Page ____ Describe the rules and procedures concerning student discipline and student dismissal (including code of conduct and student due process procedures).
- 29. Page ____ Describe the rules and procedures concerning how the school will address grievances and complaints from students, parents, and teachers, including the role the governing board will play in resolving such grievances and complaints.
- 30. Page ____ Generally describe the charter school's employment procedures and policies.
- 31. Page ____ Describe how and by whom the principal's performance will be appraised.
- 32. Page ____ State whether certification by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission will be required, and if not, describe the training and experience that will be required and the procedure for determining whether a teacher has demonstrated competency in the subject area(s) in which he/she will teach as required by NCLB.
- 33. Page ____ Describe whether the charter school will use the state salary schedule, and if another schedule will be used, provide that schedule.
- 34. Page ____ Describe the charter school's procedures to ensure that staff members are subject to fingerprinting and background checks.
- 35. Page ____ Describe the charter school's insurance coverage, including the terms and conditions and coverage amounts thereof.
- 36. Page ____ Describe whether transportation services will be provided and, if so, briefly describe the transportation program for the school. If transportation services will not be provided, describe how this will not be a barrier to eligible students to attend school.
- 37. Page ____ Describe whether the charter school will provide food services (including participation in federal school meals programs), and if so, briefly describe the proposed food services programs.
- 38. Page ____ State whether the charter school will elect to participate in the State Health Benefit Plan as provided pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-880 and § 20-2-910.

DEMONSTRATION OF FISCAL FEASIBILITY AND CONTROLS

- 39. Page ____ Describe the school's plan to ensure compliance with the financial requirements set forth in the Charter Schools Section of the Department's Financial Management for Georgia Local Units of Administration manual.

- 40. Page ____ Describe the plans for ensuring that the charter school will be subject to an annual financial audit by an independent Georgia-licensed certified public accountant.
- 41. Page ____ Identify the school's chief financial officer and describe how that person's credentials comply with the Guidance for State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9-.04.
- 42. Page ____ Describe at a high level the strategic growth plan for the school over the initial five-year charter term, including plans for securing outside sources of funding from corporations, individuals, foundations, philanthropic groups, or any source.

DESCRIPTION OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

- 43. Page ____ Describe how the governing board will comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1 *et seq.* and 50-18-70 *et seq.*
- 44. Page ____ Describe the governing board's function, duties, and role, including the board's role as it relates to the charter school's mission.
- 45. Page ____ Describe the composition of the governing board, how and when governing board members will be selected, how long each governing board member will serve, and how governing board members may be removed from office.
- 46. Page ____ List any proposed business arrangements or partnerships with existing schools, educational programs, businesses, or nonprofit organizations and disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
- 47. Page ____ Disclose any potential conflicts of interest of the founding board members.
- 48. Page ____ Describe how the governing board will ensure that current and future board members avoid conflicts of interest.
- 49. Page ____ Describe how the governing board will ensure effective organizational planning and financial stability.
- 50. Page ____ Describe how and when the governing board will complete board governance training.

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

- 51. Page ____ State if the charter school intends to contract, or has contracted for, the services of a for-profit entity or any other educational management agency. If so, describe how the contract will be in the best educational and financial interests of the charter school.
- 52. Page ____ Describe the decision making process and due diligence exercised by the founding/governing board in choosing to contract with the educational management organization.

FACILITIES

- 53. Page ____ Describe the school facility that the charter school will use and its location. State whether the school facility is new or existing. Describe any alternate or contingency plans for facilities.
- 54. Page ____ Describe any modifications necessary for utilizing the space for educational purposes.

55. Page ____ Provide documentation of ownership or a copy of the lease of the facility, a Certificate of Occupancy, and the school's emergency safety plan prepared in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185. If these items are unavailable, provide a timeline for obtaining such items or providing such documentation.

VIRTUAL CHARTER SCHOOLS – Required only if the petition seeks to create a virtual charter school. Complete and attach the “Addendum for Virtual Charter Schools” checklist, located at http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea_charter.aspx.

REQUIRED APPENDICES

- App. ____ Attach an official copy of the certificate of incorporation for the required Georgia nonprofit corporation from the Georgia Secretary of State.
- App. ____ Attach a copy of the by-laws for the nonprofit corporation.
- App. ____ Attach a copy of any admissions application the charter school proposes to use.
- App. ____ Attach the charter school's proposed annual calendar and a draft of the charter school's daily school schedule.
- App. ____ Attach a monthly cash flow projection detailing revenues and expenditures for the charter school's first two (2) years of operation.
- App. ____ Attach alternative monthly cash flow spreadsheets projecting revenues and expenditures that assume one-half (1/2) of the projected student enrollment for the first two (2) years of operation.
- App. ____ Attach spreadsheets projecting cash flow, revenue estimates, budgets, and expenditures on an annual basis for the first five (5) years of the charter term.
- App. ____ Attach documentation of any sources of revenue appearing in the spreadsheets that are anticipated to come from private sources.
- App. ____ Attach a copy of any agreements with other local schools for the charter school students' participation in extracurricular activities such as interscholastic sports and clubs.
- App. ____ Attach a copy of any intended contracts for the provision of educational management services or the provision of supplemental educational services and remediation. Such contracts shall describe the specific services for which the contracting organization is responsible. In the case of a management organization, such contracts shall clearly delineate the respective roles and responsibilities of the management organization and the governing board in the management and operation of the charter school.
- App. ____ Attach a copy of any agreement or contract for a co-sponsorship relationship with an entity for the provision of educational, technical, and/or administrative support or services.

RECOMMENDED APPENDICES

- App. _____ Attach evidence of community support (i.e., signed petitions, spreadsheets indicating parental interest, sign-in sheets from town hall meetings regarding the school proposal, etc.)
- App. _____ Attach documentation of the academic performance of other schools operated by the educational management organization.